

REMARKS

In the Office Action the Examiner noted that claims 1-13 were pending in the application and the Examiner rejected all claims. By this Amendment, the specification, drawings and claim 10 have been amended. Claims 1-13 remain pending in the application. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

The Drawings

In response to the Examiner's objection in item 1 on page 2 of the Office Action, a new Figure 9 is being submitted herewith. New Figure 9 includes the legend "Prior Art".

With respect to the Examiner's objections in items 2 and 3 on page 2 of the Office Action, the specification has been amended to correct the inconsistencies identified by the Examiner in the Office Action.

Rejection of Claims 10-13

In item 5 on page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 10-13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,805,412 to Yanagisawa et al.

In the Office Action the Examiner takes the position that Yanagisawa et al. teaches a first connection part (312a, 312b, 324, 325, 326) connectable to a unit which expands a function of electronic hardware (100). However, Yanagisawa et al.'s port replicator is integrated with a function expanding device and is thus directly connected to a unit that expands the function of electronic hardware. Therefore, it is submitted that Yanagisawa et al. does not teach or suggest the port replicator of claim 10 which includes "a first connection part connectable to the function expanding device which stores a unit that expands a function of electronic hardware." Therefore, it is submitted that claim 10 patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

Referring to claim 11, the Examiner takes the position that Yanagisawa et al. discloses two connection parts (221, 321) in Figures 6 and 9. However, referring to column 3, lines 62-63 and column 4, lines 1-2 of Yanagisawa, Figure 9 of Yanagisawa is described as a modification of Figure 6 and therefore does not teach two connection parts.

Claim 11 recites:

“a second connectable to the electronic hardware;

a third connection part connectable to the electronic hardware,
said third connection part being used to connect at least one of
said plurality of units to the electronic hardware, and said second
connection part being used to connect the rest of said plurality of
units to the electronic hardware.”

The function expanding device of claim 11 provides significant advantages because the third connection part may connect a conventionally connectable unit to electronic hardware, while the second connection part may connect to the electronic hardware newly introduced units designed to be connected to it. Further, when the unit group is divided into second and third connection parts, the number of units for each connection part is reduced (see page 7, line 23 to page 8, line 7 of the subject application). Therefore, it is submitted that claim 11 patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

Claims 12 and 13 depend from claim 11 and include all of the features of that claim plus additional features which are not taught or suggested by the prior art. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 12 and 13 patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Rejection of Claims 1-6 and 8

In item 6 on pages 3-4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-6 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. patent application publication U.S. 2002/0008497 to Tanaka et al.

It is submitted that Tanaka et al. does not teach or suggest “an operation part that enables a user to drive the unit independent of driving the unit by the electronic hardware “as set forth in claim 1.

In the Office Action the Examiner takes the position that Tanaka et al. teaches “an operation part that enables the user to drive the unit (110, 130, 140, 150, 160, 170, 180) independent of driving the unit (110, 130, 140, 150, 160, 170, 180) by the electronic hardware (40).” See pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action. However, the Examiner does not point to any “operational part”. In fact, it is submitted that no such operation part exists. That is, in Tanaka,

it would be necessary to run, for example, application software installed in a PC body even if the user only desires to listen to a music CD (see page 3, lines 11-13 of the subject application). Therefore, it is submitted that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

Claims 2-6 and 8 depend, directly or indirectly from claim 1 and include all of the features of that claim plus additional features which are not taught or suggested by the prior art. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 2-6 and 8 patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Rejection of Claims 7-9

In item 8 on pages 4-5 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected dependent claims 7 and 9 as unpatentable over Tanaka et al. in view of U.S. Patent 6,073,187 to Jacobs et al. The Jacobs et al. reference generally describes controls and indicators, including master volume control buttons, a status indicator and a control switch for a secondary operational mode of a computer system, such as a mode for playing audio CDs in a CD ROM drive independent of an operating system. The Examiner takes the position that Jacobs et al. teaches a display part, which displays the status of the unit and a connector part having an IDE interface and a music interface. However, the Jacobs reference does not overcome the above-described deficiencies of Tanaka et al. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 7 and 9 patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Information Disclosure Statement

An Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted herewith. It is requested that the references identified therein be made of record in the subject application.


Summary

It is submitted that none of the references, either taken alone or in combination, teach the present claimed invention. Thus, claims 1-13 are deemed to be in a condition suitable for allowance. Reconsideration of the claims and an early notice of allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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